

# DHS OUTREACH

A quarterly publication of the Department of Human Services Volume 1 Issue 4 Summer 2005



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## From the Desk of DHS Director Yvonne Gilchrist Reaching Higher to Uplift Lives

Welcome to the Summer 2005 edition of the DHS Outreach online newsletter. As you will learn from reading the articles, DHS is not only uplifting lives, but reaching higher to uplift lives in the District of Columbia.

We are eliminating the wait list for subsidized child care, developing a new Community-Based Partnership Initiative, and initiating parent centers in DC Public Schools. Additionally, you will read about our effective teen pregnancy prevention efforts and community information fairs.

By the time you finish reading this edition, you will understand that DHS employees are fully committed to meeting the great need for human services in this city. Our social workers, social service representatives, caseworkers, and other employees ask themselves every day, "Have I made a difference in someone's life today?" We care about, and we are committed to, meeting the needs of District residents who need our help. This is the greatness of DHS and its employees.

The word "uplift" and its meaning are so very important. It means to improve socially, intellectually, or in some other positive or fulfilling way. The word "uplift" can be spelled from the first letters of six words that have a great deal of significance to us. Those words are unite, position, learn, improve, foster, and take. Why do I believe that these six words are so relevant? Here is why.

I believe that the government and District residents must unite to conquer the scourges of crime, drugs, and violence in our neighborhoods. We must position ourselves to achieve success in most, if not all, the important improvements that we set out to make. We must learn to believe that we have the strength to make positive changes. We must improve the way in which we communicate and relate to one another. We must foster love and respect for other people and treat others as we want to be treated. And, we must take care to ensure that we all help someone, be it man, woman, child, or family who needs our help, and encourage others to do the same.

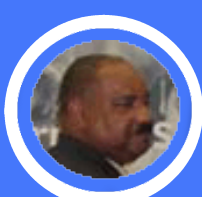
May the information you read in the DHS Outreach be of help to you or to someone you know. And remember to uplift someone's life today. In doing so, you uplift your own.



DHS Director Yvonne Gilchrist

[www.dhs.dc.gov](http://www.dhs.dc.gov)

Please direct your comments about the DHS newsletter to **Outreach!**



## The Wait is Over for Families Who Need Help to Pay for Child Care

Increased funding for fiscal year 2005 and 2006 has enabled the DHS Office of Early Childhood Development (OECD) to temporarily suspend its wait list for subsidized childcare. The wait list, which had been in place since June 2002, was suspended in April, immediately moving 1,400 children off the list and into affordable childcare.

"We now have funding to serve all who have made requests for the 2005 fiscal year and for those who will make requests throughout the 2006 fiscal year," said OECD Administrator Barbara Ferguson Kamara, adding that there is \$69 million available to pay for child care subsidies for children in fiscal year 2005. "We will now be able to provide quality care for even more children, which takes a significant burden off of even more families."

OECD, which provided childcare for 17,146 children last year, monitors the city's subsidized early care and education facilities and has the highest percentage of accredited subsidized child care facilities in the nation. The administration expects the increased funding to enable them to serve more than 18,500 children this year. This is 59 percent of the estimated 31,500 children who are eligible to receive subsidized childcare in the District. Additional local dollars have been added to the fiscal year 2006 budget to avoid another wait list; however, OECD also depends on federal dollars, which are subject to annual appropriation.



Asian residents attended a community meeting to air ideas for DC's childcare development plans at Harriet Tubman Elementary in April.

Families previously on the waiting list had to meet certain income criteria and be working, or in an activity, for at least 20 hours per week to become eligible for subsidized child care. Those who also qualify include TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) recipients who are in an approved activity such as training, job search or employment; children with disabilities; children of disabled parents; children in foster care if the foster parent is employed and children under court supervision or in child protective services. Children of adults in vocational rehabilitation services and children of teen parents also qualify.

OECD began enrolling children from the waiting list late last year and continues to reach out to families who were on the waiting list.

"We have mailed letters, called families multiple times, and put ads in newspapers to notify them that child care is now available for their child," said Kamara. "For those families we could not contact, they can enroll at any time now if they are determined to be eligible."

To schedule an appointment for eligibility determination, families can contact OECD at (202) 727-0284. In addition to required documentation for determining eligibility, children will need to have up to date physical examinations, immunizations, and lead and TB screens. Health forms are available at [www.dchealth.dc.gov](http://www.dchealth.dc.gov).

"OECD strives to serve as many eligible children and families with quality child care services as possible," said Kamara. "Providing quality subsidized child care so children can benefit and families can work, go to school, training or participate in other activities epitomizes the DHS mission of uplifting lives."

## DHS Launches Community-based Partnership Initiative Community and Faith-based Organizations Tapped to Help At-Risk Residents

Recognizing that DHS can use all of the assistance and talent available to further its mission to "uplift lives" of District residents, DHS Director Yvonne Gilchrist created the DHS Community-based Partnership Initiative. The Initiative is designed to tap the services and resources of community-based and faith-based organizations to help remove barriers that prevent troubled residents in "hot-spot" neighborhoods in Wards 7 and 8 from choosing and sustaining responsible and healthy lifestyles.

The DHS Office of Grants Management released a Request for Proposals (RFP) for the Community-based Partnership Initiative and held a pre-application conference in April 2005

*Continues on page 7*



Grants Administrator Joi Yeldell with prospective applicant at the pre-application conference in May.

## **DHS Reduces Teen Pregnancy In District Via Major Prevention Efforts**

### **Releases Free CD Featuring DC Youth Voices Advocating Teen Pregnancy Prevention for Peers**

DHS which funds the District's largest teen pregnancy prevention awareness campaign titled "Be on the Safe Side," announced in April that major teen pregnancy prevention efforts conducted by its Income Maintenance Administration (IMA) and Family Services Administration (FSA) substantially helped to reduce the teen birth rate for girls aged 15 to 19 by 37 percent between 1991 and 2002, and in 2002 resulted in a 10 percent improvement in the poverty rate for children under six and a 10 percent improvement in the proportion of children under age six living with a single mother.

According to the National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy, years of research have closely linked teen pregnancy and early childbearing to a host of other critical social issues, especially child poverty. Young children born to unwed, teenage mothers, who did not finish high school, are nine times more likely to be poor than children born to mothers without these three risk factors.

"Our teen pregnancy prevention programs, grantees, and public information campaigns have been strong in raising awareness among teenagers and their parents about teens making responsible choices," said DHS Director Yvonne Gilchrist. "The federal government recognized our success by awarding us a \$25 million bonus in FY 2004 for reducing out-of-wedlock births. IMA's "Be On The Safe Side" Teen Pregnancy Prevention Outreach and Information Campaign and FSA's Teen Parent Assessment Program target neighborhoods and schools in Wards 7 and 8, which have the highest concentration of low-income teenagers in the city."

From 1999 to 2004, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has awarded the District, through the DHS IMA, six bonus awards totaling \$125 million for reducing out-of-wedlock births, more than any other jurisdiction in the country. The funds are used to further assist low-income District residents.

DHS is also making available, upon request, free copies of the "Cause 'N Effect" audio CD, a youth-driven selection of songs, skits and poetry on preventing pregnancy, in the voices and real language of teenagers in District of Columbia. The 35 minute CD portrays the authentic voices of District youth in reality-based presentations of adolescent challenges that accompany sexuality. Designed to stimulate discussion and raise awareness, each CD package contains tips for parents and other caregivers. Adults are encouraged to use the product in different settings to initiate productive dialog with the young people in their lives about abstinence, sexuality and pregnancy prevention. The CD was produced by Motivational Educational Entertainment Productions, Inc., which is distributing thousands of the free CD to teenagers throughout the city

"The Cause 'N Effect CD really speaks teens' language and we think teenagers will really listen to the reality-based messages on the CD," said IMA Administrator Kate Jesberg. "The CD promotes both abstinence and protection."

For more information about DHS Teen Pregnancy Prevention Programs, call the DHS Office of Communications and Public Affairs at (202) 671-4420. To receive a free "Cause 'N Effect" Audio CD for youth, which explores choices, decisions, consequences and responsibilities related to sexual activity, call 1 (866) DCYOUTH.

## **DC Social Services Delivery Benchmarks Higher Than Other Local Jurisdictions**

DHS is committed to continuous improvement, and one way to ensure that we are fulfilling this pledge is to benchmark or compare our performance in key areas to that of other jurisdictions or organizations. While DHS tracks a number of benchmarks, we cannot present all of them here, but we will feature select benchmarks regularly so that you are able to monitor our progress over time. There are frequently delays in the reporting of data, but we use the most current figures available to create our benchmarks.

The delivery of social services in the District of Columbia through the DHS excels in certain activities when compared to Maryland, Virginia, and nationally. In this article, we are pleased to present benchmarks that focus on the accessibility of food stamps for our customers and the percentage of nationally accredited child care centers in the District, both very important measures that impact the quality of life for District families and their children. *Continues on page 8*



Teens at Sousa Middle School learn the cost of raising a child at annual "Reality Store" workshops led by DHS Teen Parent Assessment Program.



## **Deputy Mayor Interviewed on "Inside DHS" Radio Public Information Program Expects Seamless Delivery and Advertisement of Human Services**

*Partial Transcript of DHS Communications Chief Debra Daniels' interview with Deputy Mayor Neil Albert on WOL-AM Radio April 11, 2005*

**D. Daniels:** Deputy Mayor Albert, What is your vision for the human services cluster agencies?

**N. Albert:** The human services cluster is the largest cluster of agencies within the District government and actually presents a challenge at times in coordinating the delivery of services for our residents of the District of Columbia. In the time that I've been here I think one of the biggest challenges has been trying to get all of our agencies to work together on the same page for the same purposes and outcomes. I think if I were to sum up my vision for the cluster it would be to encourage better coordination in the delivery of services.

I firmly believe that this mayor has committed a tremendous amount of resources for our most vulnerable populations in the District of Columbia. I think we don't get the effects of that investment because we're not delivering services in a structured, uniform, and coordinated manner as we should. I'd like for the rest of my tenure here to really focus on how we deliver a real seamless system for service delivery so that our residents and folks who actually need our services do not have to traverse the different mazes of agencies that are part of the bureaucracy.



Deputy Mayor Neil Albert

**D. Daniels:** Are you thinking of a "one-stop" shop for delivery of human services?

**N. Albert:** For want of a better word, I would use "one-stop" shop. And I think DHS actually has set the tone for how we might deliver services in a coordinated manner. Listeners might know of our Strong Families Program within DHS where we hope to, and in many cases, have achieved having families get a continuum of services that they need within one location within the agency.

Last summer, we experimented with delivering sort of "one-stop" services within two neighborhoods in DC and were very successful in getting folks to access those services in their neighborhoods. So one-stop shopping is one-stop shopping as it's commonly called. But in essence, we're trying to bring all the services under one roof in neighborhoods and places where people live. So it's using the assets within the community. It could be within the Housing Authority building. It could be within the schools. It could be within our recreational centers, but having all services coordinated under one roof.

**D. Daniels:** Is it your belief then that once this is achieved that perhaps we would find that there would be many more people accessing the services that are available because it is more convenient?

**N. Albert:** Well in addition to it being more convenient, I think the way we get people accessing our services better or more frequently is I think the District of Columbia government could do a better job of actually advertising the services it offers. We have a whole host of services that are available for our residents, but many times our residents don't know that these services are available. I think in addition to locating the services in the neighborhoods we've got to actually get the word out a little better about the services that we offer.

And I could actually use my experience as former director of the Department of Parks and Recreation as an example of ways in which we can get our services out better. There were many innovative programs offered at recreation centers throughout the city, but our residents didn't quite know about them because frankly we didn't do a good job getting the word out about where those services were being offered, the cost of those services, and the outcomes to be achieved from using those services. So I think in addition to locating our services in neighborhoods and having a neighborhood-based approach to service delivery, we also have to ramp up our efforts to get the message out, get the word out on our services.

**D. Daniels:** In his State of the District Address, Mayor Williams said, and I quote, "We cannot afford to choose between economic development and social services." Would you tell us what you believe Mayor Williams meant when he made this statement?

**N. Albert:** Well any good city, any great city is not just built on bricks and mortar. It's not just about your fund balance. It's not just about the new buildings that are going up in the District. It's not just about the new residents that are being attracted to the District. But a great city is also judged by how well we take care of our most vulnerable population and I think the District has actually

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## **DHS Presents Proposed Operating Budget to the District Council**

### **Seeks funding to fulfill its mission to "Up-Lift Lives"**

Officials of the Department of Human Services (DHS) testified on behalf of their proposed operating budget request for fiscal year 2006 (FY 2006) before the Committee on Human Services of the District Council in April. The committee, chaired by council member Adrian Fenty (Ward Four), subsequently voted to approve the proposed \$395.7 million budget, which is expected to be finalized by early June.

The FY 2006 budget represents a 10.6 percent decrease from FY 2005 funding, and the proposed staffing level of 1,627 employees is nearly 27 percent less than the previous fiscal year. A significant change is that the Youth Services Administration has been removed from the DHS budget starting with fiscal year 2006 and is now the Department of Youth Rehabilitation Services with its own funding and staff.

The DHS budget is comprised of \$206,078,039 in local funds, which represents 52.1% of the total. It also includes \$173,348,699 in federal grant funds, \$3,000,000 in special purpose revenue funds, \$13,035,874 in federal Medicaid payments, and \$198,000 in funds transferred from other District agencies.

Compared to last year's approved budget, the 2006 proposal represents decreases in local funds and in funds transferred from other District agencies, while increases were proposed in federal grant funds (3.2 percent), special purpose revenue funds (40.7 percent), and Medicaid payments (4.6 percent).

In addition to the operating budget, community investment funds in the amount of \$11,790,923 were proposed for the Income Maintenance Administration, Family Services Administration, and Office of Early Childhood Development. These funds, proposed by the Mayor, are for additional payments to Supplemental Security Income recipients, replication of a successful transitional housing program, support for the District's "Homeless No More" plan that focuses on options to move homeless persons into housing rapidly, and subsidized child care payments for all eligible children on the current waiting list.

"The impact of the added funding for subsidized child care will be tremendous," said DHS Director Gilchrist. "In addition to serving all 1,400 children currently on the waiting list, it will enable at least 650 families to maintain or obtain employment, increase the tax base as a result of additional people working, and help children enter schools ready to learn and succeed in life."

## **Deputy Mayor Interviewed on "Inside DHS" Radio Public Information Program** *continued from page 4*

enjoyed a great renaissance under the leadership of Mayor Williams. But unfortunately at times some of the economic prosperity has not trickled down to our most vulnerable population.

This mayor has in past years and particularly in the upcoming Fiscal Year 2006 budget sought to redirect resources to our most vulnerable population for the people that really need it most. So I think the mayor was saying, in addition to continuing the economic prosperity that started under his leadership, that we should actually have some of the benefits of that economic prosperity trickling down to our most vulnerable citizens.

**D. Daniels:** Do you believe that the Department of Human Services, Department of Health, Department of Mental Health, Department of Parks and Recreation and others are really making a positive difference in the lives of District residents, particularly those who are low-income?

**N. Albert:** I really do think that under the leadership of Mayor Williams, the agencies in my cluster really stepped up. We've gone from agencies being in receivership to agencies really now functioning as efficiently as they can. We've had our Mental Health services in receivership. We've had our Child Welfare agency in receivership. And the mayor has worked hard to bring those out of receivership. But the mayor has also steadily increased the budgets of these agencies over the years. I think it's a fact that is lost on many people. The mayor's real commitment to improving and increasing the budgets for these agencies. The mayor really does care about our needy brothers and sisters.

There is still the issue of how do we work together across agencies so that there is a seamless system of delivering services. And so, what I'd like to see happen is that we step away from our territorial boundaries within our agencies and start thinking across agencies. And I think we have the right directors in place at these agencies right now who have a good understanding of their subject matter, who have a good understanding of what it means to work across agencies or work with each other so that we are actually complimenting the services that each agency provides so that we can really start making a more significant impact in a shorter period of time.

## DHS Strong Families Program Opens First of its Kind Parent Training Centers in Core Areas of the City



DHS Deputy Director LaMont Flanagan, Rev. Dr. Glen A. Staples of Temple of Praise Church, Deputy Mayor Neil Albert, and Ballou Principal Daniel Hudson attend ribbon ceremony to kick off the Parenting Center at Ballou Senior High.

The Deputy Mayor for Children, Youth, Families and Elders, Neil Albert, DHS Director Yvonne Gilchrist, Ballou High School Principal Daniel Hudson, and Rev. Dr. Glen A. Staples of Temple of Praise Church cut ribbons to officially open the Parenting Center at Ballou Senior High School in Southeast, DC. The Center, the first of its kind in the District, is a collaboration of the DHS Strong Families Program, Ballou Senior High School, and the Temple of Praise Church located in Southeast, DC. One month later, officials joined the Strong Families program to open the District's second parenting center at HD Woodson Senior High School in Northeast.

The DHS Strong Families Program has joined with several area churches to establish parenting centers that will provide workshops and training, led by professionally trained staff, for parents located in high-crime areas in the District. The parent centers are designed to promote confidence and competence in parents in order to encourage optimal child development. Additional centers are scheduled to open before the 2005 school year ends at Anacostia High School, Fletcher Johnson Middle School, and Davis and Stanton elementary schools.

"We're proud to be a part of such a unique and innovative initiative," said Strong Families program manager Penny Brooks. "I know that our work with the faith-based community and area schools will provide services that will

make a tremendous impact on the families we will serve and help our at-risk students overcome personal obstacles that may be impeding their success."

Core services and activities available to parents include: parent education classes; parent support groups; parent counseling; and fathers only support groups; lunch bag seminars and workshops for working parents; evening parent-teacher workshops regarding roles, rights, responsibilities, and relationships; and, sponsored parent-child field trips and activities.

Staff from the Temple of Praise Church will provide counseling while DHS staff will provide case management services for families at the center, which are expected to be open during the school year Mondays and Wednesdays from 10:00 am to 1:00 pm, and Tuesdays and Thursdays from 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm.

The Strong Families parenting center at HD Woodson Parent Center, in partnership with The Holy Christian Missionary Baptist Church for All People (located in northeast Washington), has instituted a program of community support and education for the empowerment of parents. The HD Woodson Parent Center, which will be open on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10:00am to 2:00pm during the school year, will serve as the operating hub of a unique collaboration that presently exists with the HEW Federal Credit Union, DC Department of Health Wellness Center, School Nurses' Office, and DC Strong Families Program. This combined partnership will assure that parents have immediate access to an array of resources that address their families' financial, health, social services and educational needs.

"Collaborating with the faith-based community that has already established a relationship with many of these families, will help to ensure that we reach the families in greatest need and sends a strong message for the importance of community involvement," said DHS Director Yvonne Gilchrist. "I look forward to more of these types of partnerships."

## Interim Administrator Assigned to MRDDA

Marsha Thompson has stepped in as interim administrator for the Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities Administration (MRDDA). Thompson-- who has served as interagency coordinator for the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Children, Youth, Families and Elders, as well as chief of the Evans Compliance Team at MRDDA-- will assume the roles and responsibility of administrator while a nationwide search is conducted for a permanent administrator.

"We are restructuring to improve services for MRDDA consumers," said DHS Director Yvonne Gilchrist. "This transition period will not create any disruption in services for MRDDA consumers and their families."

## **DHS “Uplifting Lives” Annual Report for Fiscal Year 2004 Now Available**

Teenagers and others into Hip Hop know that when someone says, “I’m feeling you,” it means that person understands you, knows what you mean, or senses your purpose.

This expression came to mind as we developed the highly informative DHS “Uplifting Lives” Annual Report for Fiscal Year 2004. Comprehensive and engrossing, this report truly captures why DHS programs and initiatives are so crucial to uplifting the lives of poor and low-income District residents.

We invite you to “feel” DHS by reading the DHS “Uplifting Lives” Annual Report for Fiscal Year 2004. To receive your copy, send your name, address, and telephone number via email to [katie.shephard](mailto:katie.shephard), or call the DHS Office of Communications and Public Affairs at (202) 671-4420.

## **DHS Community Outreach Brings Unity to the Community**



Approximately 2,000 visitors attended two “Unity in the Community Day” fairs hosted by the DHS Community Services Division and 15 other District government agencies, community organizations, and faith-based entities early this spring.

The fairs, held at Benning Terrace and at Kenilworth Park from noon until 4pm, were designed to provide information on numerous programs and services available to disadvantaged residents of Benning Terrace, Kenilworth, Parkside, Eastland Gardens, Mayfair, and Paradise Manor communities.

Residents were able to sign up for jobs, free health insurance, dental checkups, GED programs, drug and substance abuse programs, ex-offender counseling and mentoring, emergency and regular Food Stamps, first time homebuyer programs and more.

225 people took applications for employment, and 10,000 pounds of free can goods, onions, potatoes, tomatoes and other groceries were distributed.

Fairgoers were also treated to music by the band “Sixcess” headed up by Commander Robin Hoey of the Sixth Police District, as well as to free refreshments and beverages.

## **DHS Launches Community-based Partnership Initiative** *Continued from page 2*

that attracted nearly 100 local community and faith-based organizations. The organizations were keenly interested in learning about the Initiative so that they could compete for grant funds from DHS to serve low-income or TANF eligible families in their neighborhoods. DHS received 39 applications for funding by the May 6 deadline, and expects to finalize the selection of community and faith-based organizations by the end of July 2005.

Community and faith-based organizations selected by DHS for funding to implement the Initiative will assist low-income or TANF eligible families and at-risk youth, ages 10 to 21 years, who reside within a 10 city block radius of an organization’s location. Organizations that receive grants will provide services such as mentoring for youth and parents, tutoring for children and adults engaged in achieving literacy, life-skills building workshops, after-school enrichment programs, violence and crime prevention, recreational programs, and much more.

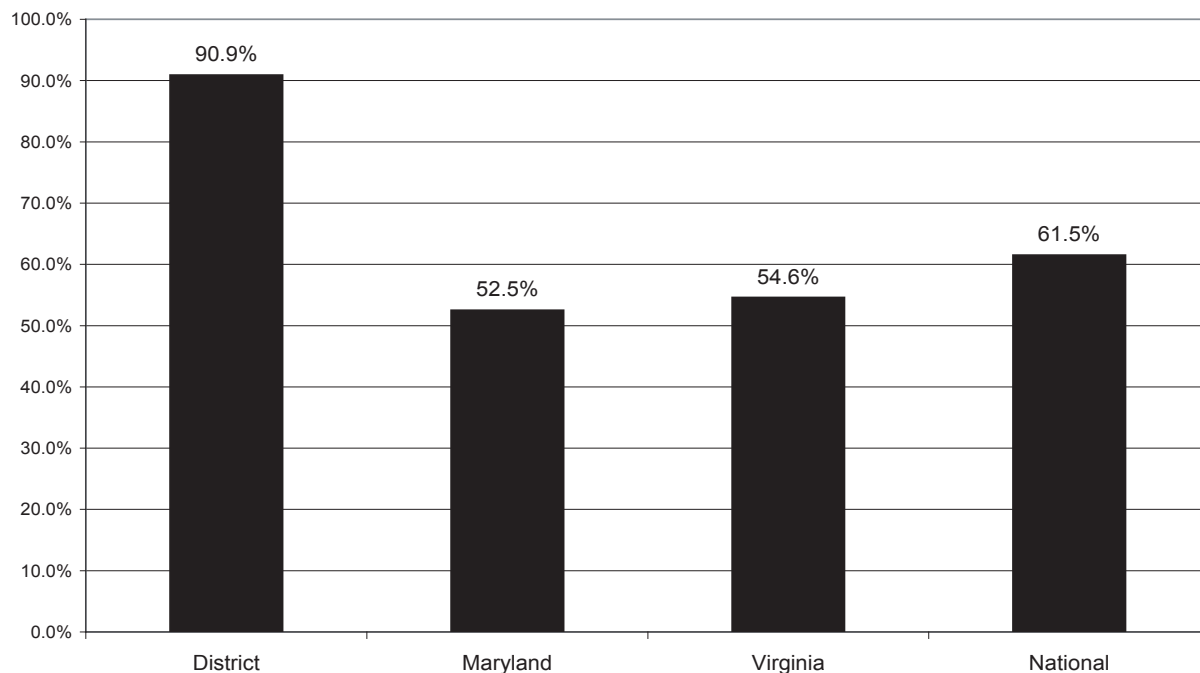
“DHS is dedicated to helping troubled, poor, and low-income District residents to improve their lives and achieve maximum self-reliance,” said DHS Director Yvonne Gilchrist. “There is no doubt that it is vitally important for the overall welfare of this city that we strengthen unstable families and children by providing quality-of-life support services. Through our Community-based Partnership Initiative, we are partnering with community and faith-based organizations to reach these families right where they live.”

## DC Social Services Delivery Benchmarks Higher Than Other Local Jurisdictions *continued from page 3*

### Food Stamp Participation Access Rate (PAR)

In September 2004, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) released the food stamp PAR for 2003, and the District of Columbia achieved a rate of 90.9 percent, placing it among the highest performers in the country. The PAR is a measure of the degree to which low-income people have access to food stamp benefits, according to the USDA. Nationally, the PAR was 61.5 percent for 2003, a 4.5 percent improvement over 2002. The District registered an improvement of 13.2 percent from its 2002 PAR of 77.7 percent, making it ninth in the nation in terms of year to year increase. For its high level of performance in 2003, the District was awarded a bonus of \$379,557. Nationally, only three other jurisdictions received awards in the high performance category. USDA Secretary Ann M. Veneman said, "These awards are designed to recognize States that have achieved the best as well as the most improved performance in providing access to nutrition assistance to low-income individuals."

**Food Stamp Participant Access Rate (PAR)  
Calendar Year 2003**



*Continues on page 9*



## DC Social Services Delivery Benchmarks Higher Than Other Local Jurisdictions *continued from page 8*

### Quality Child Care in the District

Quality child care is important to families who want only the best for their children. A sign of quality in child care is accreditation, since it denotes that a child care facility meets certain standards and uses best practices in caring for the children entrusted to it on a daily basis. The leader in accreditation is the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), the organization that developed the first national accreditation program nearly twenty years ago.

As of July, 2004, the District of Columbia ranked third nationally in the percentage of NAEYC accredited child care centers at 22.49 percent, exceeding both Maryland and Virginia. First in the nation was Massachusetts with 38.85 percent, followed by Connecticut at 25.17 percent. The overall national figure for NAEYC accredited centers was 7.95 percent. The District, through the DHS and its Office of Early Childhood Development, is committed to providing excellence in child care for its children and their families.

**NAEYC Accredited Child Care Centers**  
In Percent, As of July 2004

